AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Currently amended) A stopper device comprising:

a stopper;

a first tubular member;

a second tubular member fitting inside said first tubular member;

said stopper controlling movement of said second tubular member with respect to said first tubular member;

a stopper supporting member, fitted to an outer surface of said first tubular member, supporting said stopper;

said stopper supporting member having a first end and a second, opposite end;

said second end being proximate to a location where said second tubular member slides in and out of said first tubular member;

a first diameter of said first end being greater than a second diameter of said second end;

at least a third tubular member fitting inside said second tubular member;

at least a second stopper controlling movement of said third tubular member with respect to said second tubular member;

at least a second stopper supporting member fitted to an outer surface of said second tubular member;

said second stopper supporting member having a third end and fourth, opposite end;

said second end of said stopper supporting member having substantially the same outer dimensions as a third end of said second stopper supporting member,

~~The stopper device according to claim 1,~~ wherein said stopper supporting member has a tapered shape, with a diameter gradually increasing from said second end to said first end,

said second stopper supporting member has a tapered shape, with a diameter gradually increasing from said fourth end to said third end, and

said stopper supporting member and said second stopper supporting member are formed with different outer dimensions.

3. (Currently amended) The stopper device according to claim ~~1~~ 2 further comprising:

a rotation operating lever, pushing said stopper against or moving said stopper away from an outer surface of said second tubular member, thereby causing said stopper to prevent said second tubular member from moving when said stopper is pressed against said outer surface, or causing said stopper to permit said second tubular member to move by releasing said stopper from being pressed against said outer surface;

first and second bearing portions, facing each other at opposite ends of said stopper supporting member;

a stopper supporting hole, between said first and second bearing portions;

said stopper supporting hole formed at about a midpoint along an axial length of the overlapping portions of the first and second tubular members;

said stopper fitting in said stopper supporting hole.

4. (Previously presented) The stopper device according to claim 2 further comprising:

a rotation operating lever, pushing said stopper against or moving said stopper away from an outer surface of said second tubular member, thereby causing said stopper to prevent said second tubular member from moving when said stopper is pressed against said outer surface, or causing said stopper to permit said second tubular member to move by releasing said stopper from being pressed against said outer surface;

first and second bearing portions, facing each other at opposite ends of said stopper supporting member;

a stopper supporting hole, between said first and second bearing portions;

said stopper fitting in said stopper supporting hole;

a supporting shaft portion of said rotation operating lever being supported by said first and second bearing portions, permitting rotation thereof.

5. (Previously presented) The stopper device according to claim 3, wherein said stopper supporting hole is formed at the overlapping portions of the first and second tubular members.

6. (Previously presented) The stopper device according to claim 4, wherein said stopper supporting hole is formed at the overlapping portions of the first and second tubular members.

7. (Original) The stopper device according to claim 3, wherein said rotation operating lever has an operating tab portion having a shape corresponding to the outer shape of the stopper supporting member.

8. (Currently amended) A stopper device comprising:

a stopper;

a first tubular member;

a second tubular member fitting inside said first tubular member;

said stopper controlling movement of said second tubular member with respect to said first tubular member;

a stopper supporting member, fitted to an outer surface of said first tubular member, supporting said stopper;

said stopper supporting member having a first end and a second, opposite end;

said second end being proximate to a location where said second tubular member slides in and out of said first tubular member;

a first diameter of said first end being greater than a second diameter of said second end;

at least a second stopper;

at least a third tubular member;

said third tubular member fitting inside said second tubular member;

said second stopper controlling movement of said third tubular member with respect to said second tubular member;

at least a second stopper supporting member, fitted to an outer surface of said second tubular member;

said second stopper supporting member having a third end and a fourth, opposite end;

said fourth end of said second stopper supporting member being proximate to a location where said third tubular member slides in and out of said second tubular member; and

a third diameter of said third end of said second stopper supporting member being substantially the same diameter as said second diameter of said second end of said stopper supporting member, whereby when said second tubular member is completely inserted in said first tubular member, said stopper supporting member meets said second stopper supporting member, forming a substantially even outer surface therebetween,

wherein said stopper supporting member has a tapered shape, with a diameter gradually increasing from said second end to said first end,

said second stopper supporting member has a tapered shape, with a diameter gradually increasing from said fourth end to said third end, and

said stopper supporting member and said second stopper supporting member are formed with different outer dimensions.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently amended) A telescopic unit comprising:

a first tubular member;

a second tubular member disposed in said first tubular member, moving along an axis of said first tubular member whereby the distance by which said second tubular member projects from said first tubular member is adjusted by moving said second tubular member;

a third tubular member disposed in said second tubular member, moving along an axis of said second tubular member whereby the distance by which said third tubular member projects from said second tubular member is adjusted by moving said third tubular member;

a first stopper controlling movement of said second tubular member along said first tubular member;

a first stopper supporting member, fitted to an outer surface of said first tubular member, supporting said first stopper;

a second stopper controlling movement of said third tubular member along said second tubular member;

a second stopper supporting member, fitted to an outer surface of said second tubular member, supporting said second stopper;

a first facing end of said first stopper supporting member facing said second stopper supporting member;

a third end of said first stopper supporting member opposite to said first facing end of said first stopper supporting member, said third end having a larger outer dimension than an outer dimension of said first facing end;

a second facing end of said second stopper supporting member facing said first stopper supporting member;

said first facing end being located adjacent to said second facing end when said second tubular member is adjusted to project from said first tubular member by a minimum distance; and

said first facing end and said second facing end having substantially the same outer dimensions,

~~The telescopic unit according to claim 9,~~ wherein said first stopper supporting member and said second stopper supporting member together form a continuously tapered shape when said second stopper supporting member is adjusted to project from said first tubular member by a minimum distance, and

said first stopper supporting member and said second stopper supporting member are formed with different outer dimensions.

11. (Currently amended) A stopper device according to claim ~~1~~ 2 further comprising:

first and second bearing portions disposed on said stopper supporting member;

a stopper supporting hole between said first and second bearing portions;

said stopper supporting hole formed at about a midpoint along an axial length of an overlapping portion of the first member and an overlapping portion of the second tubular member; and

said stopper fitting in said stopper supporting hole.

12. (Currently amended) A telescopic unit according to claim ~~9~~ 10 further comprising:

a second diameter of said second facing end of said second stopper supporting member being substantially the same diameter as a first diameter of said first facing end of said stopper supporting member, whereby when said second tubular member is completely inserted in said first tubular member, said stopper supporting member meets said second stopper supporting member, forming a substantially even outer surface therebetween.